

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 T-03 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ PAB: WSBUTCHER: MRC

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NEA/ PAB: LBLAINGEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DACCA

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 045307

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, XD

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH- US RELATIONS, SUBCONTINENT ISSUES

REF: STATE 039670

1. PRIOR TO PRESENTING CREDENTIALS AT WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY MARCH 2, BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR M. HOSSAIN ALI PAID COURTESY CALL ON ASST. SECRETARY SISCO. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION ALI EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR US ASSISTANCE, WHICH HE HOPED WOULD CONTINUE, AND ALSO COMMENTED ON RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY CHOUDHURY, AND BUTCHER, NEA/ PAB, ALSO WERE PRESENT.

2. IN WELCOMING ALI, SISCO OUTLINED BROAD FRAMEWORK OF US POLICY TOWARD SOUTH ASIA AND BANGLADESH IN PARTICULAR. FOR AVERAGE US CITIZEN, SOUTH ASIA IS FAR AWAY. WHAT WE WANT IN THAT REGION IS STABILITY: REASONABLE STABILITY NOT ONLY AMONG COUNTRIES OF AREA BUT ALSO AMONG GREAT POWERS WHOM
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WE HOPE WILL INTERACT IN COMPLEMENTARY FASHION TOWARD THIS GOAL, RATHER THAN SEEKING INDIVIDUAL PRIMACY. US, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NIXON DOCTRINE, SEEKS TO HELP THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES, AND IS NOT INTERESTED IN DOMINATING SOUTH ASIA OR OBTAINING SPECIAL POSITION IN REGION. WE HOPE THAT DEEPENING OF OUR DIALOGUE WITH PRC AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIP WITH USSR WILL HAVE STABILIZING EFFECT IN ASIA AS ELSEWHERE.

3. SISCO CITED PROGRESS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND BANGLADESH, NOTING THAT REGARDLESS OF SCARS OF PAST BOTH NATIONS HAD ACTED WITH GOOD SENSE, AND PRESUMABLY WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK IN MUTUAL INTERESTS. US PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASSIST BANGLADESH WITH ECONOMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS. SISCO ADDED THAT WE WOULD TRY TO CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL, KEEPING IN MIND INCREASINGLY TIGHT FOODGRAIN SITUATION AND OTHER DEMANDS ON OUR ECONOMIC RESOURCES.

4. AMBASSADOR ALI PREFACED HIS REMARKS WITH EXPRESSION OF BDG DESIRE FOR NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. "ALTHOUGH WE MUST HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, THEY FIRST MUST RECOGNIZE REALITY," HE STATED. "ONLY THEN CAN WE SIT TOGETHER TO DISCUSS POWS, STRANDED BENGALLEES, AND BIHARIS WHO HAVE OPTED FOR PAKISTAN AND WHOM WE CONSIDER PAKISTANIS." ALI ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE OF BIG POWERS IN SOUTH ASIAN CONTEXT, NOTING BDG WELCOMED NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AMONG BIG POWERS BUT HOPED THIS WOULD NOT IMPINGE ON INTERESTS OF SMALLER COUNTRIES.

5. RE US- BD RELATIONS, ALI SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER MUJIBUR RAHMAN HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO DO HIS UTMOST TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH US. TWO COUNTRIES HAD COMMON DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. BANGLADESH HAS BEEN MOST GRATEFUL FOR US HELP IN PAST YEAR. PROBLEM OF RESOURCE GAP REMAINS, HOWEVER. SHORTFALL WORSENER BY DROUGHT AND LACK OF INPUTS LAST YEAR. BDG AWARE OF WORLDWIDE FOODGRAIN SHORTAGE AND WILL BE GRATEFUL IF U. S. CAN CONTINUE TO HELP. "WE ARE TRYING TO STAND ON OUR OWN TWO FEET. THERE IS NO HONOR IN GOING AROUND THE WORLD BEGGING FOR AID," HE ADDED.

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6. SISCO REPLIED THAT USG RECIPROCATES MUJIB' S VIEWS RE

FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF OUR RELATIONS. RE ASSISTANCE, U. S. POLICY IS SET: I. E., OUR DESIRE TO HELP. PROBLEM IS THAT OF COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES. LIMITED NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ARE IN POSITION TO PROVIDE AID. ON OUR PART IT IS QUESTION OF DETERMINING PRIORITIES FOR ALLOCATING RESOURCES, AS WELL AS MOOD OF CONGRESS. IN LATTER REGARD, BANGLADESH HAS MANY SUPPORTERS ON THE HILL AND WOULD BE WELL SERVED BY FURTHER DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS THERE.

7. RE SUBCONTINENT, SISCO UNDERLINED USG INTENTION KEEP ITS DISTANCE FROM PROBLEMS REMAINING BETWEEN INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. WE VIEW SIMLA AGREEMENT AS REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND DEEP FEELINGS OF VARIOUS PARTIES, WE CONSIDER IT IN THEIR

MUTUAL INTERESTS TO WORK TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. WE HAVE IMPRESSION BHUTTO HAS DONE A GOOD JOB IN CUSHIONING SHOCK OF LOSS OF EAST. BOTH BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN HAVE DELICATE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION TO CONSIDER, BUT U. S. NONETHELESS HOPES TWO CAN FIND WAY TO RESOLVE IMPASSE. PROGRESS ON HUMAN PROBLEMS, POWS, BENGALIS AND OTHER PERSONS WHO WISH TRAVEL ONE DIRECTION OR OTHER SEEMS ESPECIALLY DESIRABLE, SISCO CONCLUDED. ROGERS

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